

Former Patterson principal and state delegate Frank C. Robey Jr. dies



Frank C. Robey Jr. was a former Baltimore high school principal who was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates and who went on to serve as Baltimore County's administrative officer. (Weyman Swagger / Baltimore Sun)



By **Jacques Kelly**
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Frank C. Robey Jr., a former Baltimore high school principal who was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates and who went on to serve as Baltimore County's administrative officer, died of heart failure Monday at Gilchrist Hospice Care in Towson. The Lutherville resident was 80.

Born in Baltimore and raised on Weldon Circle, he was the son of Frank C. Robey Sr., the clerk of the Court of Common Pleas and a Hampden business owner, and his wife, Elizabeth Joeckel. He was a 1953 graduate of City College, where he was a played football and soccer. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at McDaniel College and a Master of Education degree at Loyola University Maryland. He received a certificate in advanced study from the Johns Hopkins University. He served in the Army from 1958 to 1960.

Mr. Robey joined the Baltimore City Department of Education and taught history at Southern High School. He became principal of Patterson High School and was later staff director in charge of data processing.

In 1967 he was a delegate at the Maryland Constitutional Convention.

"Frank was a smart fellow who was well liked and was always a tremendous vote-getter," said Joseph J. Curran, former Maryland attorney general, who also served in Annapolis with Mr. Robey. "He was someone you'd be proud to run with."

Mr. Robey, as a resident of Original Northwood, successfully ran for a seat in the Maryland House of Delegates from the old 3rd District of Baltimore. He rose through the legislature's ranks and became chairman of the appropriations subcommittee. He was elected again until he was defeated in the 1982 primary election. His home base was redistricted and he last represented the 44th District.

"He was a hard-working delegate," said former state Senator Julian L. "Jack" Lapidès, who headed one of Mr. Robey's tickets. "He was fiscally sound and knew the budget well. He was industrious. He ran on the issues and not on promises."

In 1976 he split from other members of his district and opposed the 1 p.m. start of Baltimore Colts games at the old Memorial Stadium.

"Mr. Robey maintained that there are 15 churches in the stadium vicinity that would be affected by the 1 p.m., rather than the 2 p.m. start time because of heavy traffic in the area before a game," The Sun reported at the time.

After leaving the House of Delegates, he went on to be named director of the state's Office of Central Services, an agency of the Maryland Department of General Services. In 1986 he was promoted to assistant secretary in the department of General Services and ran the state's telecommunication services.

In 1987, Baltimore County Executive Dennis F. Rasmussen, who had served with Mr. Robey in the House of Delegates, named him director of Baltimore County's central services. He later became the county's chief administrative officer, the county's top non-elected position.

"Frank took the time to educate me on the budget and the legislative process in Annapolis," said Mr. Rasmussen. "We developed a good friendship. He was loyal and was properly motivated. He was a good taskmaster. He expected people to do their job. I selected him to get the county better organized."

When working for Baltimore County, Mr. Robey made an unsuccessful pitch to state transportation officials to include a spur to serve central Towson during the planning of the light rail line from Hunt Valley to Glen Burnie.

In early 1991 Mr. Robey resigned his post when the county administration changed and Mr. Rasmussen left office.

He then became a financial advisor at Legg Mason and later at Smith Barney.

"Frank was a smart, passionate, and well respected financial advisor," two colleagues, Ron Mitcherling and Ryan Winterstein wrote in an email. "He was the lead financial advisor and instrumental in Legg Mason becoming a participant in the Baltimore County Public Schools 403-B retirement program. He helped countless teachers, faculty, and staff save toward their retirement. ... Frank was always willing to go the extra mile in pursuit of helping others."

Mr. Robey had served on the boards of the Maryland Historical Trust and the former Western Maryland College.

He was a model train enthusiast and maintained a layout in his garage.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5400 Loch Raven Blvd., where he was a member.

Survivors include his wife of 58 years, the former Joann Latshaw, a Bode flooring sales associate; two sons, John Andrew Robey of Parkville and Matthew Evan Robey of Rochester, N.Y.; and three grandsons. A son, Frank C. Robey III, died in 1974.

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